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SCHOOLING IN OAKLAND: THE CHALLENGE

A Report by the Oakland Unified School District
Strategic Planning Project

James W. Guthrie
Director

Oakland, Calif., Board of Directors, June 1985

PART 1: CONDITIONS OF EDUCATION IN OAKLAND

Submitted to the
Board of Directors
Oakland Unified School District
June 1985

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Strategic Planning Project

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

June 19, 1985

Peggy Stinnett, President
Board of Directors
Oakland Unified School District
1025 Second Avenue
Oakland, California 94606

Dear President Stinnett:

I am pleased to convey to you and other directors a copy of our report titled SCHOOLING IN OAKLAND: THE CHALLENGE. The report assesses conditions of education in Oakland on dimensions such as student enrollment, student performance, curriculum and instruction, human resources, revenues and expenditures, resource allocation, and policy dynamics. It highlights problems, challenges, and opportunities that Oakland schools face now and in the near future. Delivery of this report completes phase one of our strategic planning project.

A second report will follow which focuses on recommendations for improving Oakland's schools, how to implement changes, and how to measure progress toward district goals.

It has been a pleasure to cooperate with the Board of Directors, the superintendent, and others in assembling this report. We look forward to continued cooperation as we begin phase two.

Sincerely,

James W. Guthrie
James W. Guthrie
Director

cc: Barney Hilburn
Sylvester Hodges
Elizabeth Laurenson

Darlene Lawson
James Norwood
David Tucker

David Bowick



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DEDICATION

There are many persons without whose cooperation and support this initial strategic planning project report would not have been possible. In the acknowledgment section we express our appreciation in detail. Here, however, we wish to emphasize our gratitude to members of the school board, and particularly to its outgoing president, Peggy Stinnett, who commissioned the study and whose persistent concern for the welfare of school children motivated our efforts.

PREFACE

Why a report about CONDITIONS OF EDUCATION IN OAKLAND? For the past two decades Oakland has been rebuilding the city and revitalizing its economy. As successful as these efforts have been, sustained progress for the city and its citizens is unlikely unless an equal effort is expended in reforming Oakland's schools. The challenge is formidable, and success will necessitate substantial cooperation among public officials, community and religious leaders, business representatives, higher education and health institutions, parents, and professional educators.

This report documents the nature of the challenge. A second report, building on the first and scheduled later in 1985, will focus on recommendations for improving Oakland schools; it will discuss how to implement changes and how to evaluate progress toward school district goals. The second report will be published after others have had an opportunity to assess the conditions of education in Oakland as reported here and to help formulate recommendations for change.

Oakland has displayed great character in addressing many civic matters. That character can enhance and revive Oakland's schools. Today there is hope and opportunity for Oakland schools. There is no better time for change than now.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a report about problems, challenges, and opportunities in the Oakland public schools. It is a report about each of these topics equally. While this study uncovered serious problems in Oakland's schools, it also discovered that many of the elements needed for change, improvement, and success exist in Oakland already.

School District Strengths

Foremost among the school district's advantages is a willingness to acknowledge and address problems. The best example of this condition is that this report was itself commissioned and paid for by the Oakland Unified School District Board of Directors. Moreover, researchers who undertook the analyses described in this report received uncommon cooperation from students, teachers, administrators, and others. Hundreds of Oakland parents, employers, graduates, and residents without children spoke openly about schools and their shortcomings, about the importance of education for their children and for the city itself. All were eager to focus on problems, to view problems as challenges, to move beyond the challenges to a plan of action, and to translate actions into an effective school system.

Next, many of the school district's recent initiatives are designed to upgrade educational standards and improve student achievement. More rigorous graduation requirements, standards of achievement for all courses, pupil promotion and retention guidelines, a strict student attendance policy, standardized course titles and texts, a discipline code, and a uniform grading policy all are evidence of Oakland's commitment to educational improvement.

In addition, Oakland's schools enjoy a growing measure of parent and community support. Last year, in approximately 20 schools, the superintendent initiated a program to encourage parent involvement. Among the results, parent attendance at back-to-school nights rose from 15 percent to 45 percent; the proportion of parents attending parent-teacher conferences increased from 15 percent to 65 percent. One hundred and fifty teachers now regularly send home weekly folders of students' assignments for parents to review. This program is still in its first year, and it is to be expanded district-wide. Almost 26,000 parents in Oakland recently were reported to have pledged themselves to help their children with homework, reading, and other learning activities.

Many of Oakland's business community members and religious and higher education leaders are also clearly committed to the public schools. Through activities such as the Oakland Alliance, the Cooperative College Preparatory Program, school advisory committees, and the adopt-a-school program, public schools gain the attention, participation, and experience of Oakland's notable talent.

School District Weaknesses

Together the above described components provide opportunities for change and improvement. Still, there are deep-seated problems, and their effects are apparent in substandard academic achievement, inadequate student preparation for college and work, and growing use of non-public schools. About one in five Oakland children attend private schools. Oakland parents send their children to private schools, they explain, because they want more discipline, higher educational standards, smaller classes, better teachers, and more individual attention for their students. Similarly, parents of public school students cite a lack of discipline, poor teaching, drug use, violence, and apathetic parents as major problems in the schools. The analyses in this report reveal still other problems, including reasons why there is such a gap between school district reform initiatives and their effect on student achievement.

Questions

A first step in improving student achievement is understanding the problems that inhibit it. What are Oakland schools like? How do schools and students perform? Does Oakland have effective schools? What do parents and citizens think about schools? Are teachers and principals well trained, is their performance measured against high standards, how are they rewarded? Is school policy implemented effectively? How is money now spent? Is there enough money to accomplish school district goals? What does the future hold?

The Strategic Planning Process

In order to answer questions such as those above, the Oakland Unified School District has undertaken a strategic planning project. A strategic plan is a blueprint for identifying and addressing problems, surveying resources,

anticipating changes, and accomplishing goals. The planning process first assesses what is happening in schools. Through various analytic techniques, it anticipates future problems and opportunities, such as changes in student enrollments and school revenues, or the need to hire additional teachers. Subsequent planning team efforts will build on this information to develop recommendations about how to address the problems that emerge, how to take advantage of opportunities, and how to measure progress toward specific goals.

The strategic planning project is conducted by a team of specialists from the University of California at Berkeley with the assistance of individuals from Stanford University, the Educational Testing Service, and elsewhere. However, this is fully a cooperative effort with the Oakland school community. No one can plan better for the children and youth of Oakland than the professional educators, parents, and members of the public who are ultimately responsible for their success. Specialists can offer advice, provide analytical expertise, and possibly view schools with a greater measure of objectivity. The information in this report is offered to the Oakland Unified School District as a planning tool. It can never replace the experience, commitment, and responsibility of educators and others it informs.

An Information Gap

Compilation of this report was seriously impeded by the school district's inadequate data collection procedures. District staff cooperated fully. However, the Oakland Unified School District does not regularly undertake long range projections of future conditions such as enrollments, revenues, and personnel needs; neither does it collect information about routine matters such as student drop-out rates, teacher absenteeism, average class sizes, or proportion of the professional workforce regularly assigned to classroom teaching duties. Although student achievement data are collected, they are not communicated effectively to teachers and principals. Thus, student achievement data are not used to evaluate student progress or to develop school district policies. Systematic district-wide surveys of clients (parents and pupils) and follow-up polls of past graduates do not occur. We have compensated for such deficits where possible. However, effective school management necessitates building an information collection and planning capacity.

A Second Phase

This report summarizes this first phase of the planning effort. A second major report, to follow in the near future, will focus on recommendations for improvement. This second reform report will describe means by which the Oakland community can cooperate to address major problems in Oakland schools; it will also contain substantial detail about the manner in which recommended reforms can be implemented.

Acknowledgments

This initial report is the result of literally thousands of hours of interviews, questionnaires, information collection, school visits, classroom observations, and statistical analyses. Analyses cover enrollments, student achievement, curriculum and instruction, personnel, finances, resource allocation, policy dynamics, and public opinion. An effort of this magnitude would not have been possible without the cooperation of Oakland's professional educators and classified employees, parents, citizens, business officials, and public representatives. Errors of fact or interpretation, however, are the responsibilities of the authors alone.

Expectations For A School District

Before turning to details of this report, we wish to make clear our expectations for a school district. These expectations comprise the standards against which we assess Oakland's schools.

Above all, a school district exists to impart knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes to students. In addition, the learning environment should encourage pupils to pursue knowledge the remainder of their lives. The purpose of a school district board of directors is to establish direction for the district, express such direction in clear statements of policy, employ and reasonably evaluate a chief executive officer, establish a principled tone for the district, and evaluate progress toward district goals.

The chief executive officer is responsible for employment and oversight of all district personnel, adherence to state law, implementation of policy, and provision of appropriate information to the board of directors. Other employees are obligated by professional principles and personal standards to perform assigned duties in an effective manner and serve the best

interests of district clients, pupils, parents, and citizenry. The board of directors should ensure that sufficient information is provided on a systematic basis to assess the extent to which these expectations are being met. This report is intended to assist in this undertaking.

II. HIGHLIGHTS

Oakland's schools are characterized by uncommon diversity. It is possible to find among them at least one example of almost everything connected with public education. Several Oakland schools are as good as the best schools in California; others perform at the opposite end of the continuum. Similarly, many of Oakland's administrators and teachers are able, but a number are less able and their contributions to educational excellence and student achievement are questionable.

There are high and low points of student achievement. District-wide test scores, however, are below state averages, and below what has been predicted for Oakland schools based on students' social and economic characteristics. This low level of achievement has existed for a decade or more. Yet, other urban school districts in California have been able to accomplish substantial improvement during this same period.

Oakland's residents, particularly parents of public school students, are fearful about and dissatisfied with the present conditions of education. Oakland teachers are similarly dissatisfied. Only one in four parents of high school students report that they believe their children are receiving a good education. Interestingly, the more information Oakland parents believe they have regarding the city's public schools, the less favorable is their opinion. Nationwide, on the other hand, the most negative opinions are held by the least informed.

Oakland must educate increasing numbers of students. Enrollment is predicted to grow during the next five years by approximately 15 percent. By 1990, total enrollment in Oakland's schools will approach 59,000, and an increasing proportion of these students will be either limited- or non-English speaking.

Not only will enrollments grow, but also there will be a need to hire additional teachers. This will occur because of added numbers of students and because of expected staff resignations and retirements. Approximately 20 percent of Oakland's current teaching force is expected to resign or retire between now and 1990. This provides an unusual opportunity to employ a large number of new, able teachers. However, the school district's current induction, personnel evaluation, training, and incentive programs--mechanisms for ensuring that teachers and principals maintain high standards of performance--are generally ineffective.

Oakland schools do not now allocate financial resources in a productive manner. Many more individuals are assigned to central office administrative functions than is justified by the school district's size or complexity. This excessive administrative overburden deprives schools, classrooms, and teachers of the

resources they need. Also, class sizes in Oakland are higher than state and national averages and average teacher salaries are lower than the San Francisco Bay Area average.

In addition, Oakland's schools now operate on significantly less money in constant dollars than they did five years ago. Moreover, Oakland cannot expect a financial dividend to facilitate further changes and improvements. The district's per pupil revenues are likely to match inflation in the near future which means that they are not expected to increase in purchasing power terms. Indeed, if the district were to continue to spend at its present rate, it would experience an annual deficit of approximately \$20 million by 1990.

Improvements in Oakland's schools, therefore, must come from improved policies and practices in classrooms. Yet, the district currently experiences a significant gap between the intent of its policies and their effect on student achievement.

In fact, classroom practices vary widely and often are not affected by school district policies. For example, many students now are not benefiting from the district's recently enacted "standards of achievement" because of problems associated with policy implementation district-wide. In addition, many students are consistently inattentive in classrooms, and measures of student performance are inappropriate.

There are, however, several unusually effective schools in Oakland, in both hill and flatland areas. A relatively new analytic technique has made it possible to identify schools where students achieve at higher levels than would have been predicted by students' social and economic circumstances. There are at least 15 such elementary schools in Oakland. While this number is not large, it is heartening. It demonstrates in a way other than simple test scores that there are good schools in Oakland right now. The challenge is to ensure that there are more of them soon.

III. STUDENT ENROLLMENTS

Enrollment Will Climb 7,500 by 1990

Oakland's school population will soon grow substantially. By the end of this decade, more than 58,500 young people will depend on Oakland's public schools for the skills, knowledge, confidence, and abilities they need to succeed in future jobs and college. That is almost 7,500 more students than attend school in Oakland today, an increase of 15 percent in five years.

Oakland schools have not experienced growth like this since the 1950s. In fact, the enrollment pattern until recently has been one of decline. From an enrollment high of 64,783 in 1964, Oakland's school population declined throughout the 1970s. Five years ago there were 49,448 students attending public schools in this city.

More recently the school district has experienced modest though fluctuating growth. Soon these student population numbers will turn sharply upwards and climb steadily and significantly through 1990. Growth on this scale has consequences for school revenues, classroom space, and the numbers of teachers needed and the subjects they teach. (All of these topics are discussed in later sections.) Figure 1 displays these enrollment patterns and projections.

Presently, Oakland's students come from every neighborhood in the city; almost half live in poverty. Most of the students' parents graduated from high school (86 percent), fourteen percent finished college, and about three percent earned post-graduate and professional degrees, becoming lawyers, doctors, and the like. Almost half of these parents (46 percent) themselves attended Oakland public schools, and seven of ten have lived in Oakland for at least ten years.

Among Oakland students presently there is a 33 percent drop-out rate; the state-wide drop-out figure is 18 percent, as Figure 2 illustrates. If this devastating wastage is reduced, secondary enrollments will grow even more.

Black, Hispanic, and White Enrollments Will Remain Proportionately Stable; Asian Enrollment Will Climb Significantly

These enrollment projections cover the school district as a whole. Information on which the forecasts are based is not adequate to make similar estimates for individual schools.

Enrollment in Oakland Schools: 1968 - 1990

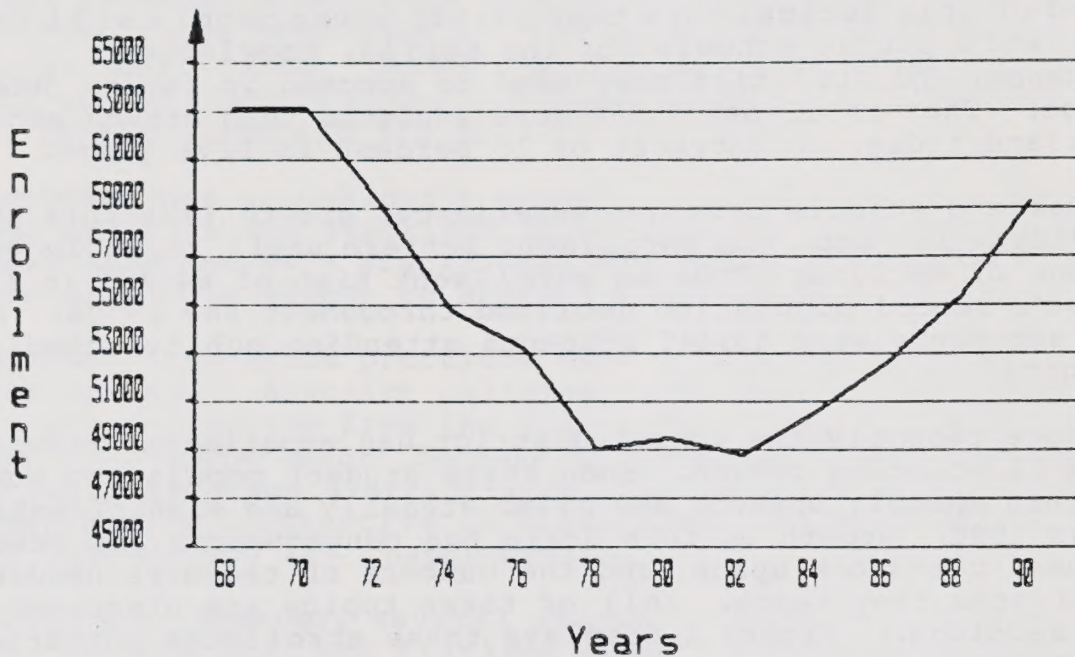


Figure 1

This graph describes Oakland enrollment trends from 1968 to 1990. Enrollment dropped from a high of about 63,000 in 1968 to a low of about 49,000 in 1980. Enrollments have climbed since 1980 and are projected to continue climbing through 1990. Enrollments will climb because of higher birth rates and continued immigration.

Drop-out Rates Compared

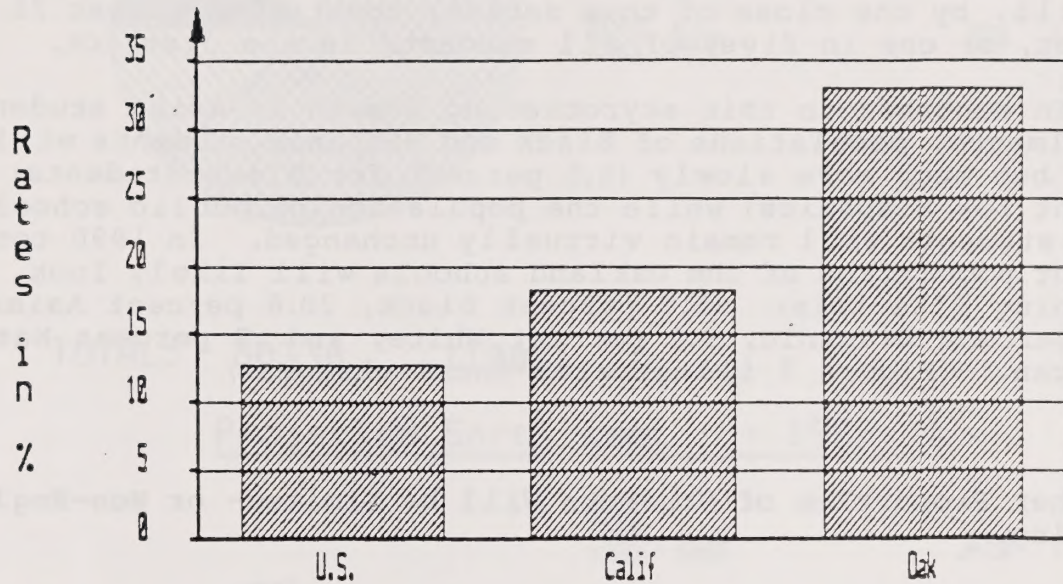


Figure 2

This graph compares drop-out rates in Oakland with state and national averages. For the U.S. as a whole, 12.8% of 10th graders drop out by the twelfth grade. In Oakland the figure is 33%.

Principals, who know local conditions, are in a better position to make these particular judgements. It is possible, however, to make these projections in a way that illustrates the continuing ethnic diversity of the Oakland public schools.

Oakland students are Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. Their numbers in relation to one another will change as the overall student population grows. Asian students, for example, account today for 13.7 percent of the student body, and will, by the close of this decade, constitute almost 21 percent, or one in five, of all students in the district.

In contrast to this skyrocketing growth in Asian student enrollments, populations of Black and Hispanic students will grow, but much more slowly (8.5 percent for Black students; 15.1 percent for Hispanics) while the population of public school White students will remain virtually unchanged. In 1990 total student population of the Oakland schools will likely look something like this: 58.7 percent Black, 20.6 percent Asian, 10.8 percent Hispanic, 9.2 percent White, and .7 percent Native American. (Figure 3 illustrates these changes.)

A Higher Proportion of Students Will be Limited- or Non-English Speaking

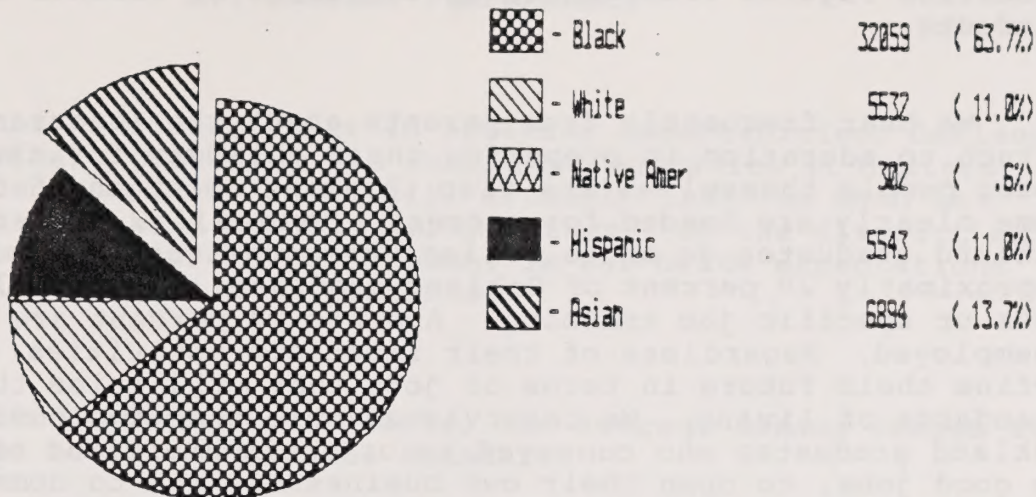
Educating these young people will be complicated by a growing number and proportion of Oakland students from homes where English is not a primary language. Limited- and non-English speaking youngsters will comprise almost 21 percent of all Oakland students by 1990. Today only about 16 percent of Oakland's students speak languages other than English at home.

Present Facilities Will Accomodate Increased Enrollment Although Redistricting May be Necessary

Although several Oakland schools are presently overcrowded, there are sufficient classrooms in the District overall to accomodate 7,500 additional students. This conclusion assumes that class sizes do not diminish and that additional instructional programs are not added.

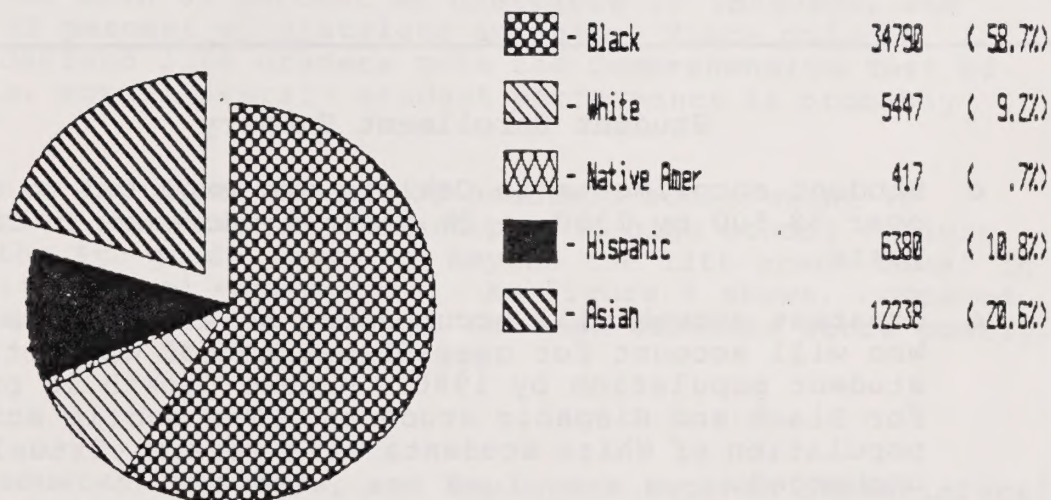
Unfortunately, increased enrollments will not occur evenly across the district. Indeed, enrollments will increase fastest in already overcrowded schools. Consequently, altering attendance boundaries may be necessary.

Enrollment by Ethnic Group --- 1984-85



TOTAL: 50330 (100%)

Projected Enrollment --- 1989-90



TOTAL: 59272 (100%)

Figure 3

These charts describe enrollment changes in Oakland from 1984 to 1990. Although Black, Hispanic, White and Native American enrollments remain proportionally stable, Asian enrollments increase significantly.

Education Figures Prominently in the Hopes of Parents and Students

We hear frequently from parents about the importance they attach to education in preparing their children for the future. Young people themselves are also thinking about the future, and some clearly are headed for success. Typically, 53 percent of Oakland graduates go on to college or vocational training. Approximately 29 percent of Oakland graduates go directly into jobs or specific job training. Another 18 percent are unemployed. Regardless of their immediate activities, they often define their future in terms of jobs that will raise their standards of living. We interviewed more than two hundred recent Oakland graduates who conveyed to us their ambitions to succeed in good jobs, to open their own businesses, and to command high salaries.

How well prepared are these students? How successful have they been in mastering skills that will help them achieve their goals? How does education in Oakland compare with schooling students receive in other California cities? For answers to these questions and other insights we examine achievement results.

Student Enrollment Summary

- o Student enrollments in Oakland are expected to reach over 58,500 by 1990, a 15 percent increase in five years.
- o Greatest growth will occur among Asian students, who will account for over 20 percent of the total student population by 1990. Modest growth is projected for Black and Hispanic students. The public school population of White students will remain virtually unchanged.
- o The number of limited- and non-English speaking students will continue to grow. By the end of this decade they could constitute 21 percent of all Oakland students.
- o No additional facilities will be needed, although altering attendance boundaries may be necessary.

IV. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Important as education is in creating opportunities, Oakland is not now widely producing the excellent education it desires. In some Oakland schools, certainly, students learn as much as they would in the best schools in the state. In the district as a whole, however, student achievement is far below expectations and certainly below what is possible.

At Five of Six Oakland High Schools, the Average Senior Scores at a Ninth Grade Level on National Standards

At five of six Oakland high school the average Oakland high school graduate possesses the same skills in reading, writing, and math as an average U.S. student achieves by the 9th grade. In other words, by the time Oakland's students graduate, they have fallen three years behind their peers across the nation in their command of basic skills. As Figure 4 shows, Oakland scored lower than 72 percent of school districts nationwide in reading, lower than 69 percent of districts in language, and lower than 55 percent of districts in math. Since only 60 percent of Oakland 12th graders take the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, actual overall student performance is probably lower.

The range and distribution of academic achievement in Oakland is also revealing. Oakland public high school seniors score from the 4th grade level to beyond the 12th grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics. As Figure 5 shows, compared with California pupils as a whole, Oakland students score poorly, falling well below the state average.

Parents, Graduates, Teachers, and Employers Express Dissatisfaction with Student Achievement in Oakland

It is not surprising, given low overall levels of student achievement, that parents have strong views about Oakland's schools. When asked to grade the performance of Oakland schools as a group, much as a teacher would grade a test, 24 percent of Oakland's parents thought high schools were performing sufficiently to earn a grade of A or B. This means that only one quarter of the parents think high schools are doing a good job.

Parents across the nation generally have a better opinion of public schools. Forty-two percent of parents nationwide graded

12th Grade Achievement Score Comparisons

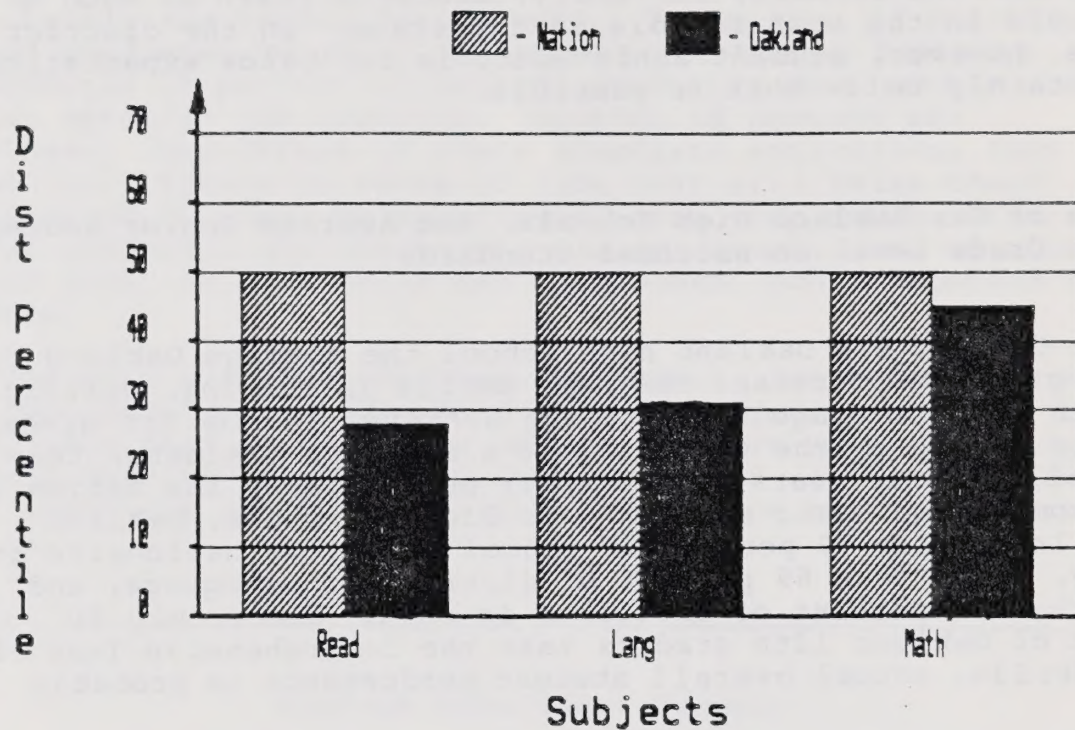


Figure 4

This graph compares the performance of Oakland's twelfth graders on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills with the performance of twelfth graders in the nation. The numbers on the left side are percentile scores based on all the districts in the nation. For example, in twelfth grade reading, Oakland scores at the 29th percentile which means that 28% of districts in the nation score lower and 72% of districts score higher than Oakland.

Achievement by School in Oakland

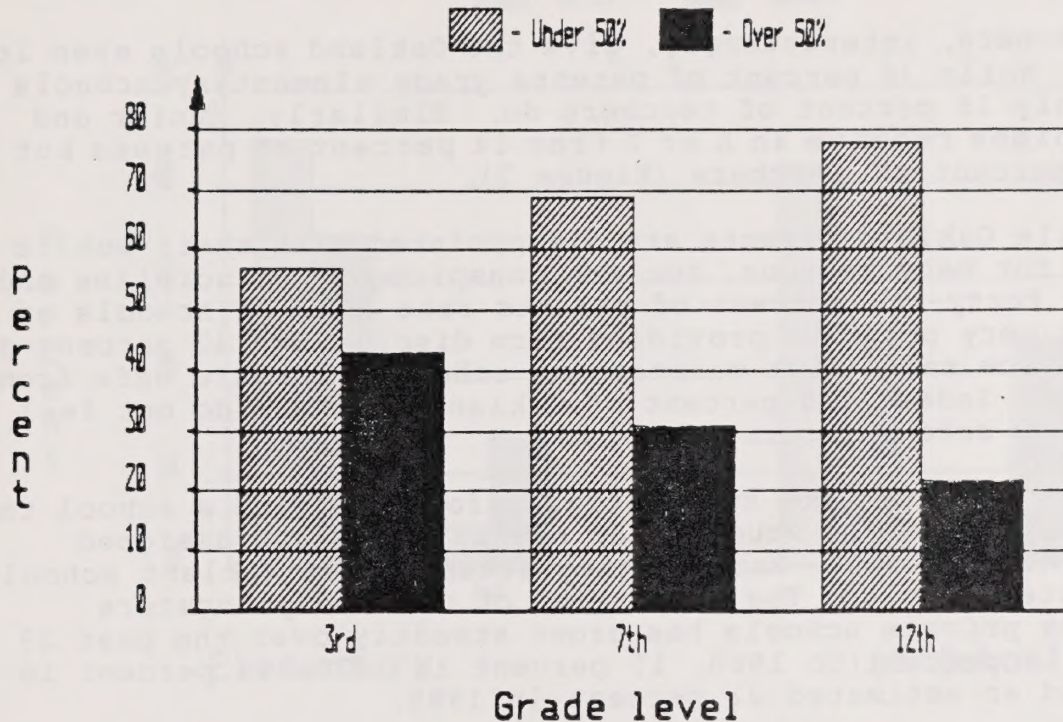


Figure 5

Some schools in Oakland consistently score above the state average (50%) on achievement tests. In other words, most students in these schools are progressing more rapidly than the average student in the state. This graph compares percentages of high performing schools and low performing schools based on 1984 Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills scores in reading, writing and math. For example, 43% of Oakland schools scored above the state average at 3rd grade and 22% at 12th grade.

their high schools A or B. At the opposite end of the grade scale, 24 percent of opinion poll respondents in Oakland awarded Oakland high schools a D or F. This negative assessment is almost five times the percentage awarded by parents nationally. Yet, 65 percent of Oaklanders and 56 percent of parents believe themselves poorly informed about Oakland's public schools. Figure 6 compares the views of Oakland's parents with those from around the nation.

Teachers, interestingly, give the Oakland schools even lower grades. While 36 percent of parents grade elementary schools A or B, only 16 percent of teachers do. Similarly, junior and senior highs receive an A or B from 24 percent of parents but just 8 percent of teachers (Figure 7).

While Oakland parents are disappointed with their public schools for many reasons, two are conspicuous: discipline and safety. Forty-one percent of parents rate Oakland schools as "poor or very poor" in providing firm discipline; 42 percent gave the same low rating for maintaining schools that are safe from violence. Indeed, 25 percent of Oakland teachers do not feel physically safe in their schools.

Many parents make substantial efforts to find a school they like: 45 percent of students do not attend their assigned neighborhood school. Rather, they attend other Oakland schools or private schools. The proportion of Oakland youngsters attending private schools has grown steadily over the past 25 years: 12 percent in 1960, 15 percent in 1970, 18 percent in 1980, and an estimated 21 percent in 1985.

Once their children are settled in a public school, sixty-two percent of Oakland parents believe that their own child's school, rather than the district's schools as a whole, rates a grade of A or B. Asian parents are the most satisfied. Almost three quarters of Asian parents said their children's schools were doing a good job, followed by Whites (67 percent), Hispanics (58 percent), and Blacks (53 percent).

Most surprising, in the face of their own poor performance, is that Oakland students believe themselves to be well educated and knowledgeable. Eighty-three percent of high school seniors report that they were "being very well trained for jobs or further education." This misperception badly handicaps Oakland students for the competitive demands of the work place or college.

Unlike currently enrolled students, Oakland's recent graduates and employers hold no illusions. Graduates quickly encounter problems created by their inadequate preparation. In contrast to currently enrolled high school seniors who report they are ready for work and college, 60 percent of graduates

What Grade Would You Give Your Local Schools?

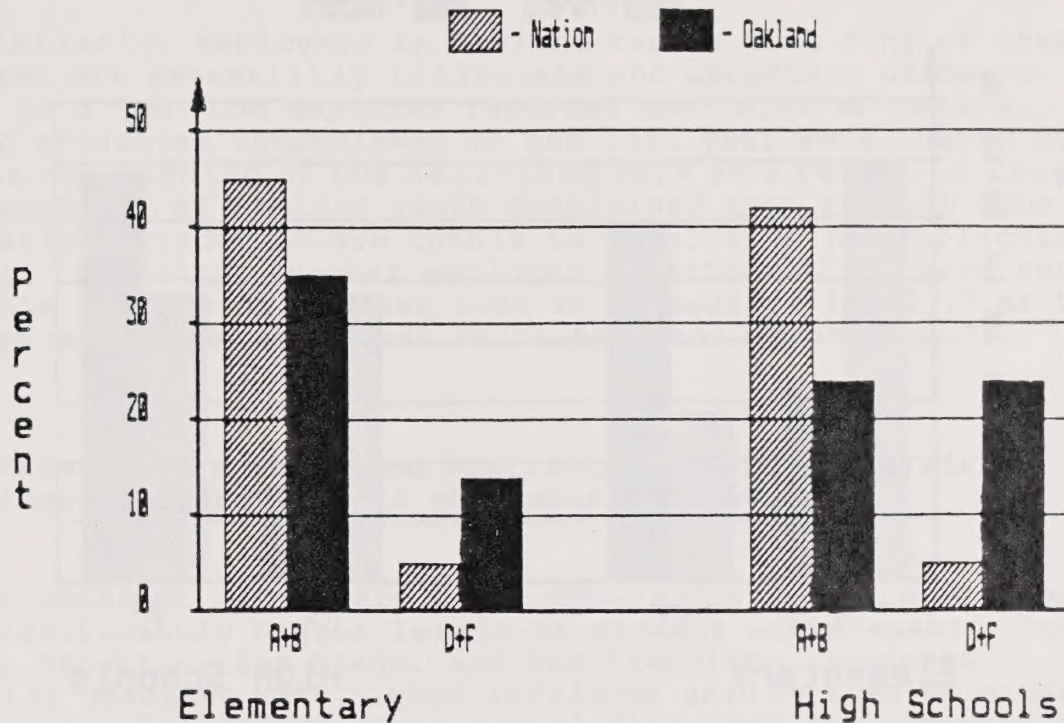


Figure 6

This graph compares Oakland and national responses to the question "What grade would you give your local schools?" The two bars at the left of the chart show the percentage of residents who graded their local elementary schools with A's or B's; the next two bars represent D's and F's. The four bars on the right of the chart give the same information for local junior and senior high schools. Oakland residents are less satisfied with their elementary and secondary schools than the national average, and are more dissatisfied with secondary schools than with elementary schools.

Parent and Teacher Opinion Compared

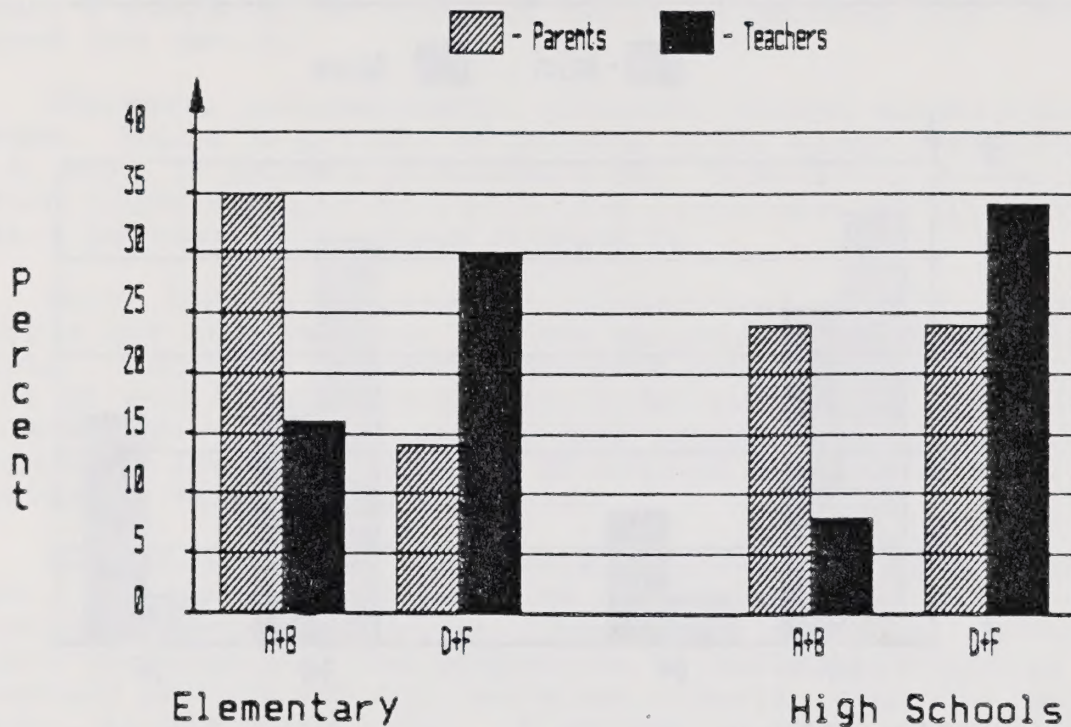


Figure 7

This graph compares the responses of Oakland parents and teachers to the question "What grade would you give your local schools?" The two bars at the left of the chart show the percentages of respondents who graded elementary schools with A's or B's; the next two bars represent D's and F's. The four bars on the right of the chart give the same information for junior and high schools. Teachers are less satisfied with Oakland schools than parents.

surveyed, just 18 months after leaving an Oakland high school, reported that they were poorly trained in math and 50 percent responded they were equally ill-prepared in writing. When these young people reflect on their own schooling, 83 percent said that schools could have demanded more homework, better discipline, and more attention in class.

Similarly, employers in Oakland report that many of these graduates are essentially illiterate and uncertain of how to behave on a job. One employer reported that nine of twelve Oakland graduates interviewed in the last year were unable to explain the meaning of the half-inch mark on a ruler. A large-scale employer of Oakland youth complained that roughly four of five Oakland graduates are unable to complete a job application legibly. Students, another employer asserted, often have not known the meaning of phrases such as "immediate family," or the difference between the words "arrested" and "convicted."

In Contrast, There are Urban Districts in California with Significantly Higher Levels of Student Achievement

In contrast, there are urban school districts in California with significantly higher levels of student achievement. In Fresno, Stockton, San Diego, and San Francisco, students generally graduate with higher levels of skills than do students in Oakland. Several of these school districts are comparable to Oakland in size, complexity, and students' social and economic characteristics. Thus, it appears reasonable to expect higher levels of achievement from Oakland's students. (Figure 8 graphically illustrates these points.)

Students Achieve at Higher Than Expected Levels in At Least Fifteen Oakland Schools, in Both Hill and Flatland Areas

There are schools in Oakland, in both hill and flatland areas, that achieve well above the state average or consistently produce achievement results above expectations. In either case, success is occurring and youngsters are learning. To some degree, we can view these as "effective schools," and they may provide lessons for Oakland schools as a whole.

The most obviously effective schools are those where students score consistently above state averages on tests of basic skills. A second category, with higher achieving students, are those with scores in the top 25 percent of all student scores state-wide.

Comparing Oakland with Similar Districts

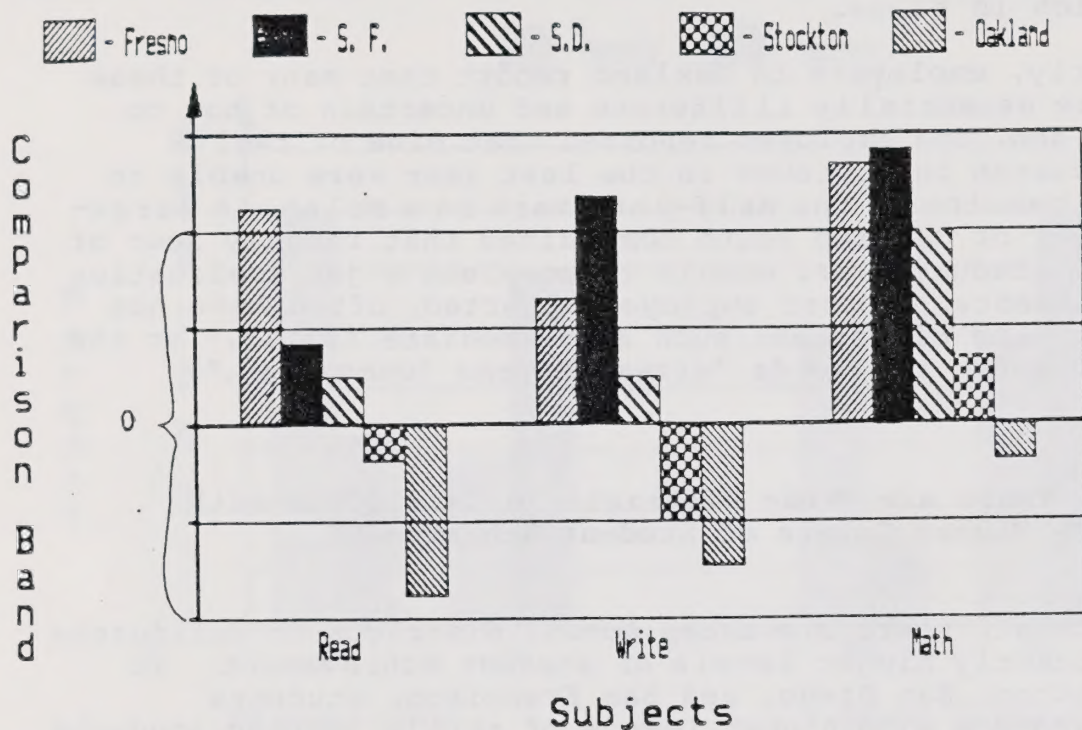


Figure 8

This graph compares Oakland performance on the California Assessment Program with the performance of four similar districts. The bars represent scores on third, sixth, eighth, and twelfth grade tests in reading, language, and math from 1980 through 1985. The eighth grade test was first given in 1984. The California Assessment Program determines comparison bands to adjust for differences in student background characteristics. Scores below zero indicate that districts did worse than expected. Scores above zero indicate that districts did better than expected.

NOTE: For a discussion of "comparison bands" see page 23.

Using these measures as guides, 12 elementary schools in Oakland last year scored above the state average in reading (3rd and 6th grades); 3 scored in the top quarter. Similarly, two secondary schools scored above the state average, and two scored in the top 25 percent of all schools in the state. Small though these numbers are, they represent relative successes among Oakland public schools.

In addition, at least 15 elementary schools in Oakland have been identified as consistently performing above expectations. "Expectations" are determined from the so-called comparison band on the California Assessment Program (CAP), a state-mandated test of basic skills.

The state determines a comparison band for each school. The comparison band is based upon the proportion of students who are limited- and non-English speaking, percentage of families on welfare, and a teacher report on family occupations. Student achievement scores at each school in reading, writing, and math are reported in relation to comparison bands. Using comparison bands to report test results enables schools to measure their performance in relation to other schools with similar students.

Oakland has at least 15 elementary schools that consistently score above expectations. Regardless of their absolute test scores, something productive is happening in these schools that enables their students to score higher than their peers across the state on tests of basic skills. However, none of the high schools has consistently exceeded expectations.

Observations at these high performing elementary schools indicate several common traits. Among these are close monitoring of student progress, intense emphasis on instruction by principals, effective discipline, and a curriculum which is logically linked from one grade level to the next.

This demonstrates that it is possible for youngsters to learn and for Oakland's schools to teach them successfully. It may be possible to capture elements of their success and spread them more widely throughout the school district.

What are the problems and where are the gaps that leave many Oakland students so unprepared for jobs and college? Why has Oakland been unsuccessful in producing more high achieving students? An assessment of the school curriculum and instructional practices and an examination of personnel and organizational conditions suggest some answers.

Student Performance Summary

- o The average Oakland senior at 5 of 6 high schools scores at the 9th grade level compared to peers nationwide.
- o Oakland students perform below state averages on tests of basic skills.
- o Students in selected other California urban school districts are able to reach higher levels of achievement.
- o Oakland parents, graduates, teachers, and employers express substantial dissatisfaction with student achievement.
- o At least fifteen Oakland elementary schools, in hill and flatland areas, produce students who achieve at higher than expected levels.

V. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Too Few Students Are Sufficiently Engaged in Learning Activities in Oakland Classrooms

Approximately 75 percent of the school day in Oakland is set aside for reading, writing, and mathematics. This amount of time devoted to basic skills meets or exceeds national standards. Indeed, evidence suggests that in recent years the school district has increased the amount of time allocated to academic instruction.

Unfortunately, in many classrooms large proportions of students do not pay attention to the teacher and, in many such cases, are involved in activities unrelated to instruction. Thus, while a substantial percentage of available class time is allocated to academic instruction, it cannot be construed that all students are participating in productive ways. In some classrooms, although teachers actively present new material to students, a number of students ignore the teachers and instead converse with other students, read unrelated books, or simply sit.

The proportion of under-utilized student learning time varies within and among schools. A group of students was observed to waste time in one class, then move to the next period to another teacher and become almost model students. Generally, the amount of time students are actually engaged in learning is higher in elementary schools and high schools and lower in middle and junior high schools. Similarly, the amount of time students are engaged in learning varies with effectiveness of individual teachers.

Homework is a way of extending learning time and potentially of involving parents directly in their children's school work. Oakland is implementing an ambitious homework policy intended to increase time spent on homework. It is too soon to assess the outcome of this effort.

"Standards of Achievement" Are Unevenly Implemented

In 1984 Oakland implemented a district-wide set of grade level expectations, in order to increase student achievement and assure continuity of instruction throughout the district. These standards of achievement outline basic levels of performance

expected of all students in each grade. It is specified that students must master 70 percent of the standards in order to be promoted.

The standards of achievement are ambitious, and if fully implemented would result in significant improvements in student achievement. Unfortunately, the standards have been implemented unevenly. Although instructional personnel are aware of the standards of achievement, the degree to which student expectations are accepted, utilized, and monitored varies greatly from school to school. One elementary school teacher noted, "We need a model that tells us how 'in depth' we must master the standards. We need examples of ways to evaluate kids, to see if they've met the standards."

While several teachers adhere closely to the standards, others are more skeptical. Said one teacher "I've adapted the standards of achievement to my children, and I'm realistic as to what they can and can't do." A disgruntled teacher, who found the standards "too low" for his students, commented, "They are on a shelf with all the other information that OUSD sends! I've developed my own goals for the kids."

Despite such comments from a few, achievement standards have been favorably received by the vast majority of teachers and principals. However, there is a lack of organizational support and direction for implementing standards.

In short, the district has not developed or implemented a management system that ensures uniform use of the standards of achievement. Fortunately, many districts in California have succeeded in implementing a well-aligned curriculum, and thus can provide Oakland with models.

While Standards of Achievement and Textbooks Are Reasonably Aligned, Existing Tests Are Neither Sufficient Nor Appropriate

In Oakland, curriculum guidelines, standards of student achievement, and textbooks are reasonably well-aligned. That is, virtually all knowledge and skills contained in the student achievement standards are encompassed by textbooks currently in use. However, there are important skill areas specified in the standards of achievement that are untested by the district's testing program. For example, oral listening skills are consistently stressed throughout elementary grades, yet they are not directly tested by the district's widely used Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). In addition, a child's ability to produce coherent and logical writing is not evaluated by the CTBS. Student study skills and work habits were frequently mentioned as deficient by teachers and administrators and are not

measured by the testing program. Unless these skill areas are consistently monitored by other evaluation procedures, effectiveness of the standards of achievement will be reduced.

If tests were developed and widely used which were closely coordinated with the standards, teachers would receive a steady flow of corrective feedback on a student's performance, and students could be held accountable for their progress. Moreover, if these necessary tests were fashioned comprehensively across subject matter areas and grade levels, they could provide the basis for a systematic measurement scheme enabling the school board and central administration to assess effectiveness of policies and schools.

Many districts in California have, like Oakland, aligned their curriculum guidelines with textbooks. However, unlike Oakland, they have also proceeded to implement appropriate testing programs. Such testing programs rely on measures that have been matched to curriculum guidelines. In districts with such high precision tests, student achievement has improved.

Oakland's High School Curricula Are Fully Serving Neither College Preparatory Nor Advanced Vocational Students

The majority of Oakland high school students are enrolled in general and skills track courses, as Tables 1-4 demonstrate. English course enrollments (Table 1) indicate that the vast majority of students in English classes are unprepared for high school level assignments. This is demonstrated by the predominance of enrollments in Skills English courses which are designed for students who function two or more years below grade level. Enrollments in English Skills courses average 58 percent district-wide, ranging from 16 percent (Skyline) to 77 percent (Fremont).

In addition, fewer than half the students in any high school are enrolled in any English course whatsoever, and this despite a stringent district graduation requirement of three years of high school English. Rather than enrolling in classes that require systematic reading and writing, a majority of students fulfill English requirements by enrolling in courses such as drama, journalism, public speaking, and yearbook.

Math course enrollments (Table 2) in Oakland high schools vary from 70 to 98 percent. In only two schools, however, are even one in five math students enrolled in third and fourth year college preparatory math classes.

TABLE 1

Enrollment in High School English Classes
1984-85

	<u>School Enrollment (1)</u>	<u>English Enrollment Per Total School Enrollment</u>		<u>Types of English Enrollment Per Total English Enrollment</u>		
		<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>P e r c e n t</u> <u>Skills General Advanced</u>		
Castlemont	1583	596	38%	72%	23%	5%
Fremont	1500	455	30	77	23	0
McClymonds	857	304	35	57	25	18
Oakland High	2203	957	43	59	32	1
Oakland Tech.	1554	546	35	66	33	1
Skyline	2031	834	41	16	67	17

(1) Oakland Unified School District, 5th Statistical, 1984-85.

Source: Oakland Unified School District, Course Master Directory,
April 1985.

TABLE 2

Enrollment in High School Math Classes 1984-85

	<u>School Enrollment(1)</u>	<u>Math Enrollment Per Total School Enrollment</u>		<u>Advanced College Prep Enrollment Per Total Math Enrollment(2)</u>	
		N	%	N	%
Castlemont	1583	1290	81%	79	6%
Fremont	1500	1320	88	169	13
McClymonds	857	838	98	119	14
Oakland High	2203	1534	70	300	20
Oakland Tech.	1554	1369	88	106	8
Skyline	2031	1592	78	424	27

(1) Oakland Unified School District, 5th Statistical, 1984-85.

(2) Advanced college prep math classes include: Intermediate Algebra P, Advanced Algebra-Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus.

Source: Oakland Unified School District, Course Master Directory, April 1985.

Similarly, enrollments in laboratory science courses that meet University of California admission requirements are low, as Table 3 shows. While 45 percent of science students at Skyline are enrolled in science courses that meet UC requirements, only ten percent of science students at Castlemont and Fremont high schools are enrolled in UC-acceptable courses.

In addition to low student enrollments in academic and college preparatory courses, large numbers of vocational education students are enrolled in low-skill vocational courses (Table 4). The majority of these students are in skills and general track courses that prepare them for neither the world of work nor college.

Despite the lack of rigorous preparation, Oakland high school counselors predicted that between 15 and 55 percent of high school seniors, depending on the school, would be eligible to enter four-year colleges after graduation (Table 5). The implication of the course enrollment data, however, is that many of these students will have difficulty with their college studies.

Curriculum and Instruction Summary

- Too few students are sufficiently engaged in learning activities in Oakland classrooms.
- Standards of Achievement are being unevenly implemented.
- While standards of achievement and textbooks are reasonably aligned, existing tests are neither sufficient nor appropriate.
- There is no district-wide testing program which can serve as a policy assessment system.
- The high school curricula are aimed at neither college nor advanced vocations.

TABLE 3

Enrollment in High School Science Classes
1984-85

	<u>School Enrollment(1)</u>	<u>Science Enrollment Per Total School Enrollment</u>		<u>College Prep Science Enrollment Per Total Science Enrollment(2)</u>	
		N	%	N	%
Castlemont	1583	1090	69%	109	10
Fremont	1500	820	55	82	10
McClymonds	857	545	64	120	22
Oakland High	2203	1217	55	353	29
Oakland Tech.	1554	688	44	165	24
Skyline	2031	1173	58	528	45

(1) Oakland Unified School District, 5th Statistical, 1984-85.

(2) Science classes meeting UC Berkeley admissions requirements for laboratory science: chemistry, physics, biology, and physiology.

Source: Oakland Unified School District, Course Master Directory, April 1985

TABLE 4

Enrollment in Selected Vocational Classes
1984-85

	School Enrollment(1)	Vocational Enrollment N	Percent Vocational Enrollment By Category									
			retail	cosmetology	typing	carpentry	electrical	computer	health	auto	printing	advanced photography
Castlemont	1583	200	88%	6%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fremont	1500	148	37	6	51	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
McClymonds	857	105	24	17	10	44	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oakland High	2203	570	36	1	7	0	24	.6	0	0	16	7
Oakland Tech.	1554	335	10	0	7	10	17	15	33	6	0	0
Skyline	2031	168	65	11	10	0	0	7	0	0	0	0

(1) Oakland Unified School District, 5th Statistical, 1984-85.

Source: Oakland Unified School District, Course Master Directory, April 1985

TABLE 5

**Estimates of 1985 Oakland High School Graduates
Eligible for Four Year Colleges
Compared to the Nation**

	<u>Number of Graduates</u>	<u>Graduates Eligible for Four Year Colleges</u>	
		N	%
Castlemont	285	48	17%
Fremont	380	51	15
McClymonds	120	35	29
Oakland High	500	160	32
Oakland Tech.	250	80	34
Skyline	611	336	55

**National College-Going Rate by
Socio-Economic Status (SES)
(1980 Census)**

Low SES	16%
Middle SES	30%
High SES	53%

Source: Head counselors, Oakland high schools, as reported by Jean-Paul Schreter, Administrator for Counseling and Financial Aid.

Summary of 1987 District 11th General Election
Election Results for District 11th
Election Results for District 11th

Candidate		Ballots Cast	Ballots Received
Democratic		110	110
Republican		100	100
Independent		100	100
Total		310	310

Source: Election Results for District 11th
Election Results for District 11th
Election Results for District 11th

110 100 100
Total 310

Source: Election Results for District 11th
Election Results for District 11th
Election Results for District 11th

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES

Public Schools are the Third Largest Employer in Oakland

The Oakland Unified School District, with over 6,000 employees, is the third largest employer in Oakland (Figure 9). It is a complex enterprise with an annual budget of approximately \$200 million that supports a certificated staff of 2,536 teachers (FTE), 141 site administrators, 230 central office administrators, and 3000 classified employees. These resources combine to educate over 50,000 students in 94 schools.

Teacher salaries in Oakland range from \$16,431 to \$32,280. Oakland's teacher salaries are among the lowest in the San Francisco Bay Area (Figure 10), though teacher salaries in Oakland climb to among the highest in the Bay Area when the 7.5 percent annuity is included. This annuity applies only to teachers employed prior to 1985. Therefore, it no longer acts as an inducement for recruiting new teachers.

Class Sizes Are Larger Than State and National Norms

Oakland's average pupil-teacher ratio (number of students divided by number of classroom teachers) is 25:1, which is higher than both state and national averages (Figure 11). Furthermore, younger students in Oakland are placed in larger classes than their secondary school counterparts.

Evaluation, Supervision, and Staff Development are Ineffective

There are a few examples in Oakland of well planned and executed school site staff development programs. However, in too many instances staff training programs are ineffective and fail to address teacher needs. One consequence of this is that ineffective teachers are not provided assistance adequate to improve.

Staff supervision in Oakland also is limited in scope and generally ineffective. Teachers do not receive the support and guidance necessary to become more productive. According to both teachers and administrators, supervision received by Oakland teachers has little influence on teaching.

Six Largest Oakland Employers

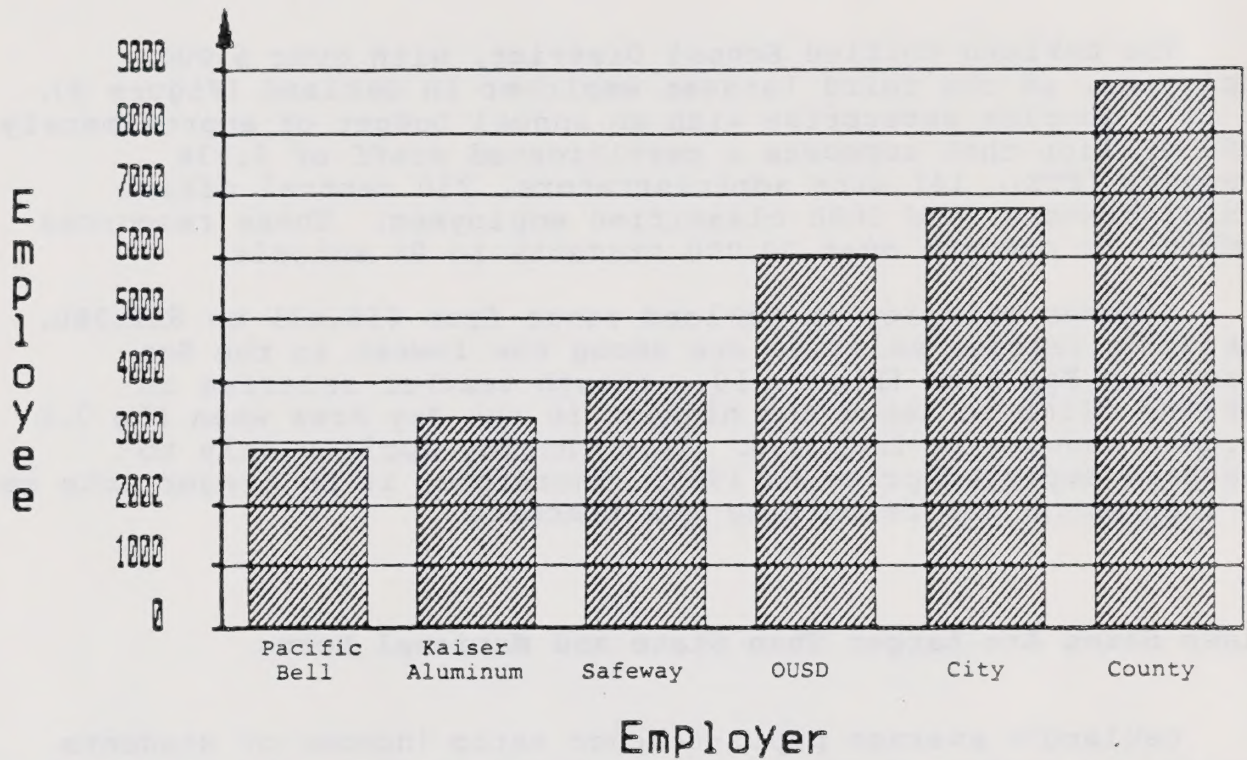


Figure 9

This graph displays the number of employees at Oakland's six largest organizations. For example, Safeway employs approximately 4,000 individuals.

BAY AREA TEACHER SALARY COMPARISONS

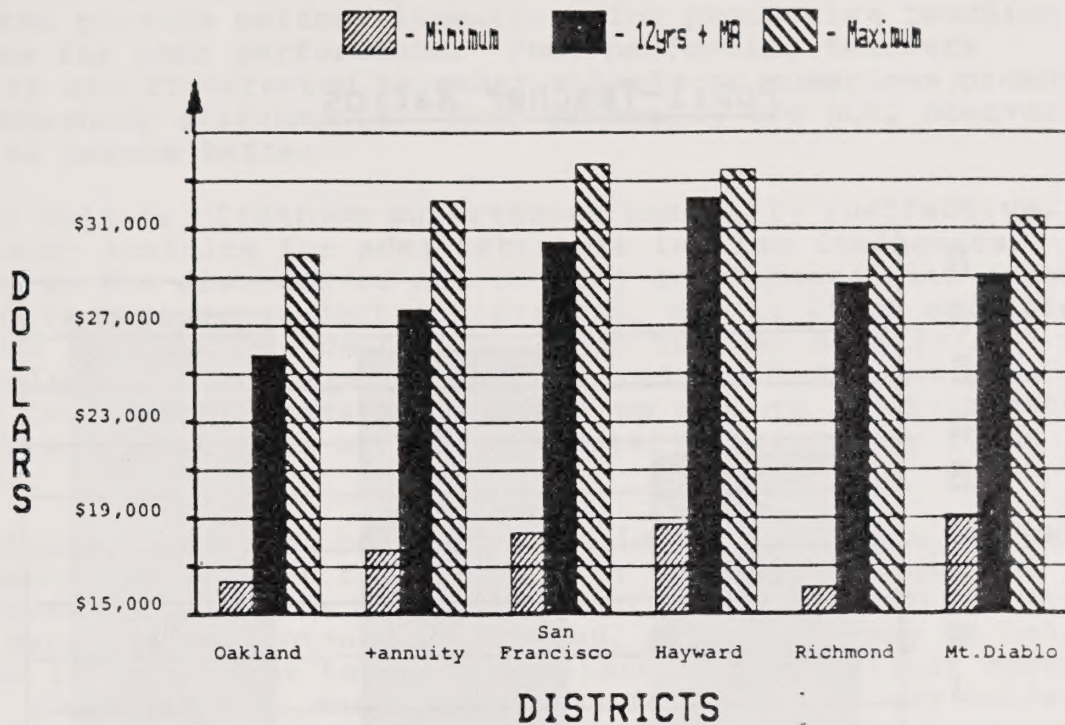


Figure 10

This figure compares teacher salaries in large Bay Area districts. Starting from the left the figure shows: Oakland salaries without the 7.5% annuity, Oakland salaries with the annuity, San Francisco salaries, Hayward salaries, Richmond salaries, and Mount Diablo salaries.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

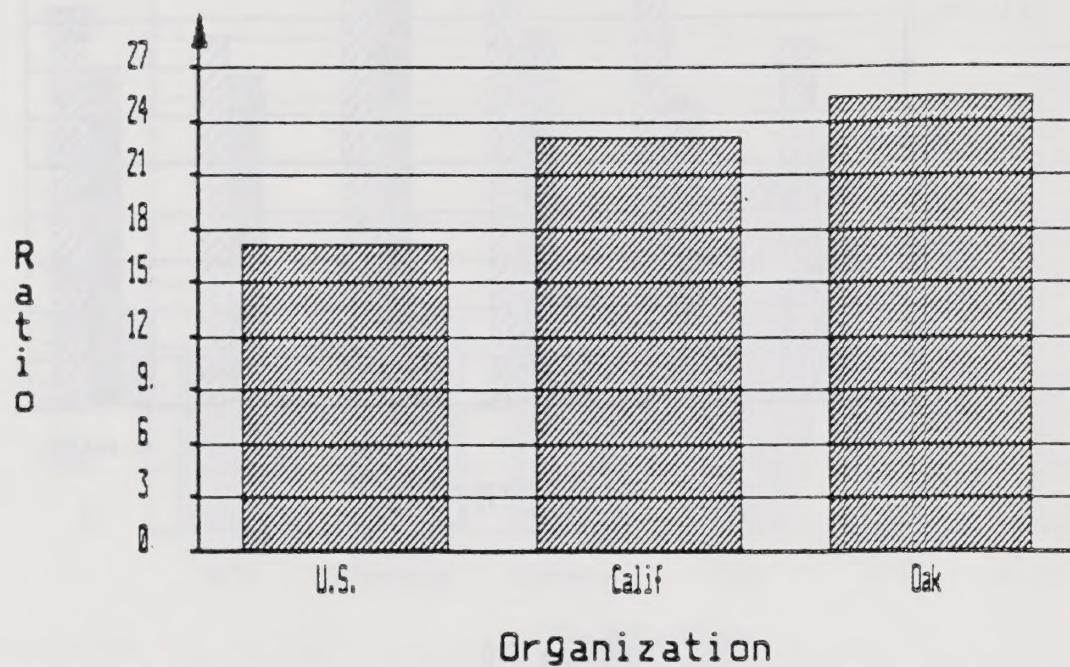


Figure 11

This graph compares pupil-teacher ratios in Oakland, California, and the nation.

The Oakland Unified School District also does not hold teachers accountable for high performance. Present evaluation procedures provide neither incentives for productive teaching nor sanctions for poor performance. Poor performing teachers generally are transferred to other schools or sometimes promoted to non-teaching assignments. They generally are not, however, helped to become better.

Not only is classroom supervision generally ineffective, but supervisory training for administrators is also inadequate. Training in the district is not tightly coordinated with programs intended to improve student achievement, nor is it of sufficient depth and intensity to cause changes in teacher behavior. Nevertheless, Oakland spends approximately \$600,000 per year on teacher training programs and curriculum support. Unfortunately, teachers and principals are not adequately assisted by these efforts.

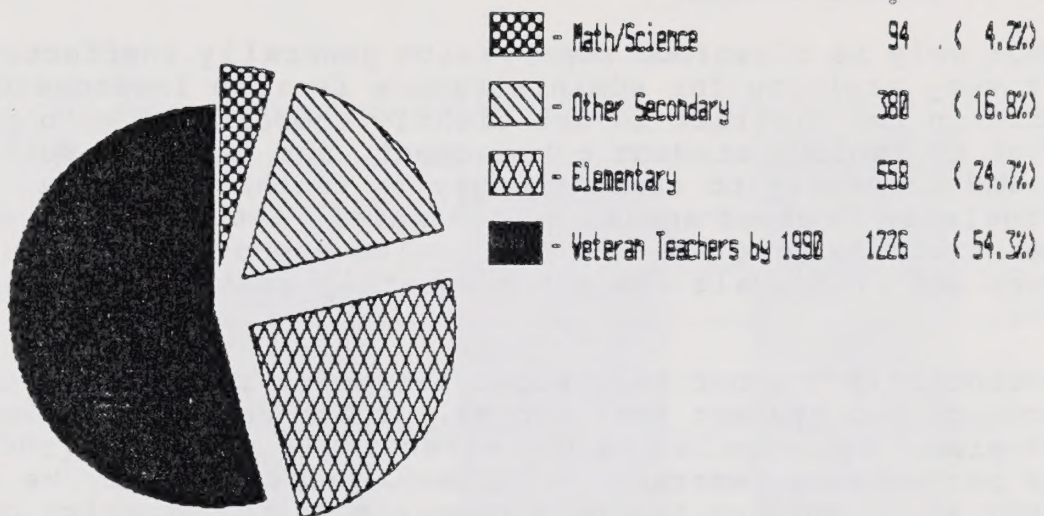
Principals are not held accountable for improving teacher performance and student test scores, or for reducing student absenteeism. Principals are not effectively evaluated and are not on performance contracts. Instead, principals may be held in disfavor if parents or teachers complain to the district central office. Consequently, many principals follow what they perceive to be the wise course: maintaining student and employee harmony at their school but not improving academic performance.

Finally, classified employees reported that they were not systematically supervised, but were generally satisfied with their working conditions. Most reported that more district attention to the management practices affecting them would increase productivity at work sites.

Within Five Years, Oakland Must Recruit and Train Over 1,000 New Teachers

Soon Oakland will need to employ many new teachers. By 1990 Oakland schools will need 2,258 classroom teachers. Personnel forecasts indicate that only slightly more than half of these teachers are working in Oakland today. This means that Oakland will need to recruit and train about 1,000 teachers by the end of this decade. Figure 12 illustrates these projections and reveals how these needs are distributed by subject area and grade level. Oakland will need 76 math/science teachers and over 600 K-3 teachers. Exacerbating the need, teacher shortages are building state-wide, and math and science instructors and elementary teachers are particularly scarce.

Teacher Hiring Projections --- 1990



TOTAL: 2258 (100%)

Figure 12

This chart projects Oakland's teaching force in 1990. The large dark wedge represents teachers who were teaching in 1985 and will continue teaching through 1990. The other three wedges represent additional teachers who must be hired between 1985 and 1990.

Human Resources Summary

- o Public schools are the third largest employer in Oakland.
- o Class sizes are larger than state and national norms.
- o Teacher evaluation, supervision, and staff development are ineffective.
- o Principals are not systematically evaluated nor are they on Performance Contracts.
- o Within five years, Oakland must recruit and train over 1,000 new teachers.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also provides a brief overview of the methodology used in the study.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the study area. It includes information about the location of the study area, the population of the study area, and the characteristics of the study area. It also discusses the data sources used in the study.

3. The third part of the report is a detailed description of the study results. It includes information about the findings of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the implications of the findings. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and recommendations section. It summarizes the main findings of the study and provides recommendations for future research and policy. It also discusses the significance of the study and the contribution it has made to the field of study.

5. The fifth part of the report is a bibliography section. It lists all the sources of information used in the study, including books, articles, and other documents. It also includes a list of references used in the study.

6. The sixth part of the report is an appendix section. It contains additional information that is not included in the main body of the report, such as maps, tables, and figures. It also includes a list of figures and tables used in the study.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of figures and tables. It provides a brief description of each figure and table and indicates where it can be found in the report. It also includes a list of figures and tables used in the study.

8. The eighth part of the report is a list of figures and tables. It provides a brief description of each figure and table and indicates where it can be found in the report. It also includes a list of figures and tables used in the study.

VII. REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

Oakland's Public Schools Operate Presently on \$14,000 Less Per Classroom Than in 1977-78 (Constant Dollars)

Figure 13 displays Oakland's General Fund revenue per ADA for the past eight years (that is, Average Daily Attendance, the measure of student enrollment used by the state for school revenue calculations). General Fund revenues support the basic educational program for all children. Revenues have increased every year since 1979-80 in current dollars (except 1982-83) and, as a result, total revenues per ADA have increased. However, in constant dollars there has actually been a substantial decrease in revenues per ADA, as shown in Figure 13. The decrease between 1977-78 and 1982-83 was more than 25 percent and the increase since then has been small. The district is operating on 22.5 percent less money per pupil than in 1977-78 (constant dollars), the equivalent of \$14,000 less per classroom. In the 1977-78 school year, Oakland spent \$61,000 per classroom. In constant dollars, the current amount is \$47,000.

Revenue Per ADA Will Remain Stable in Constant Dollars for the Next Five Years

The state-determined per pupil base revenue limit (that is, the amount of basic state aid) in Oakland is \$2,210 (1984-85). This is almost exactly the state-wide average for unified school districts in California. Oakland's per pupil base revenue limits are projected to increase by 35 percent to \$2,990 by 1989-90. Revenue projections are based on projected ADA multiplied by the projected base revenue limit, plus projected revenue from a variety of other sources. (Results of these projections are presented in Figure 14.)

These projections suggest that Oakland's revenues in constant dollars per ADA will remain almost the same for the next five years. In other words, under current California school finance conditions, Oakland's schools cannot expect significant gains in real purchasing power between now and the end of this decade. Oakland will be operating on a larger overall budget, both because inflation will render current dollars per ADA larger and because the district will have more students. However, added dollars will not result in added purchasing power.

Oakland Revenues per Student, 1977-78 to 1984-85 in Current Dollars and Constant 1977-78 Dollars

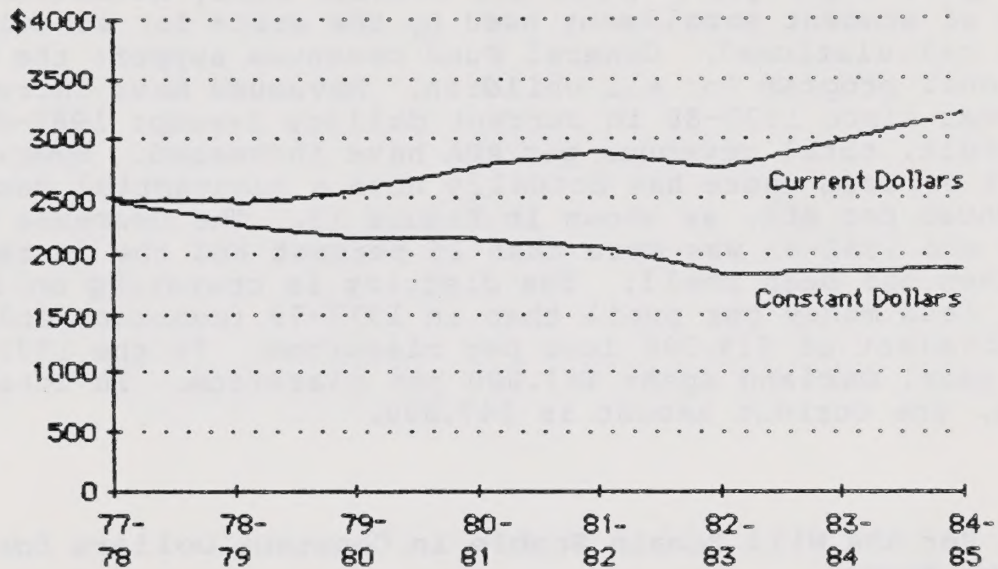


Figure 13

This graph displays Oakland revenue per student from 1977 to 1985. Although the line for current (inflated) dollars indicates an increase, the constant dollar line indicates a substantial decrease in real resources devoted to education in Oakland.

Oakland Revenues per Student, 1977-78 to 1989-90 in Current Dollars and Constant 1977-78 Dollars

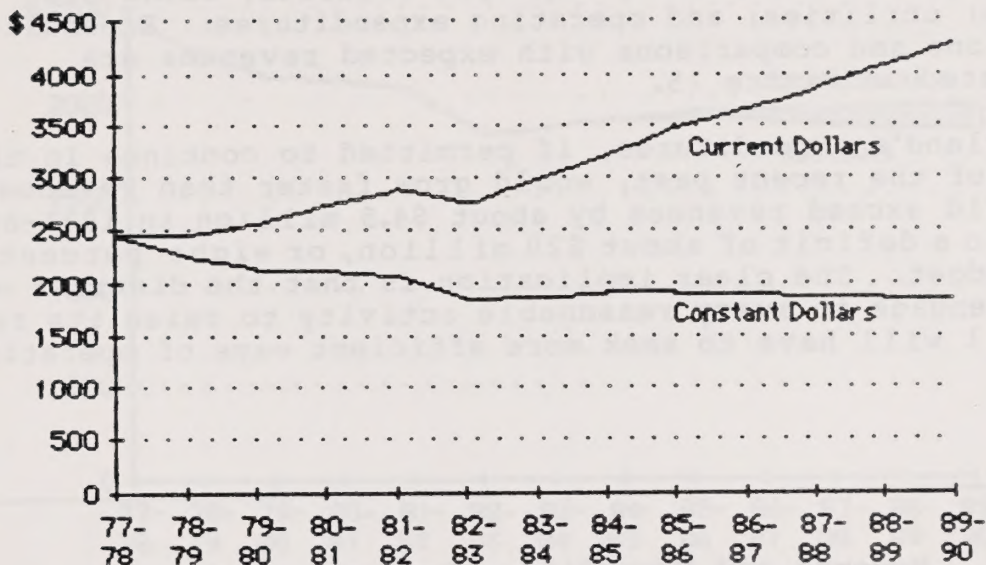


Figure 14

This graph displays actual Oakland revenues per student from 1977 to 1985 and projected revenues through 1990. Although the line for current (inflated) dollars indicates an increase, the constant dollar line indicates a stable level of real resources per student through 1990.

Expenditures Will Exceed Revenues By About \$20 Million in 1989-90

Expenditures are projected in a different way and for a different purpose than revenues. The assumption is made that expenditure patterns from the recent past will be continued. Expenditures can then be compared with revenues to see whether there is apt to be a fiscal dividend or shortfall. Expenditures include items such as salaries for teachers, administrators, and support staff; maintenance; employee benefits; books and supplies; utilities; and operating expenditures. Expenditure projections and comparisons with expected revenues are illustrated in Figure 15.

Oakland's expenditures, if permitted to continue in the pattern of the recent past, would grow faster than revenues. They would exceed revenues by about \$4.5 million in 1985-86, rising to a deficit of about \$20 million, or eight percent of the total budget. The clear implication is that the district will have to engage in every reasonable activity to raise its revenue and still will have to seek more efficient ways of operating.

Revenue and Expenditure Projections Summary

- o Oakland's public schools operate now on \$14,000 less real money per classroom than in 1977-78.
- o Revenue per ADA will remain stable in constant dollars for the next five years.
- o Under present conditions, expenditures will exceed revenues by about \$20 million in 1989-90.

Oakland Revenues and Expenditures per Student Constant 1977-78 Dollars

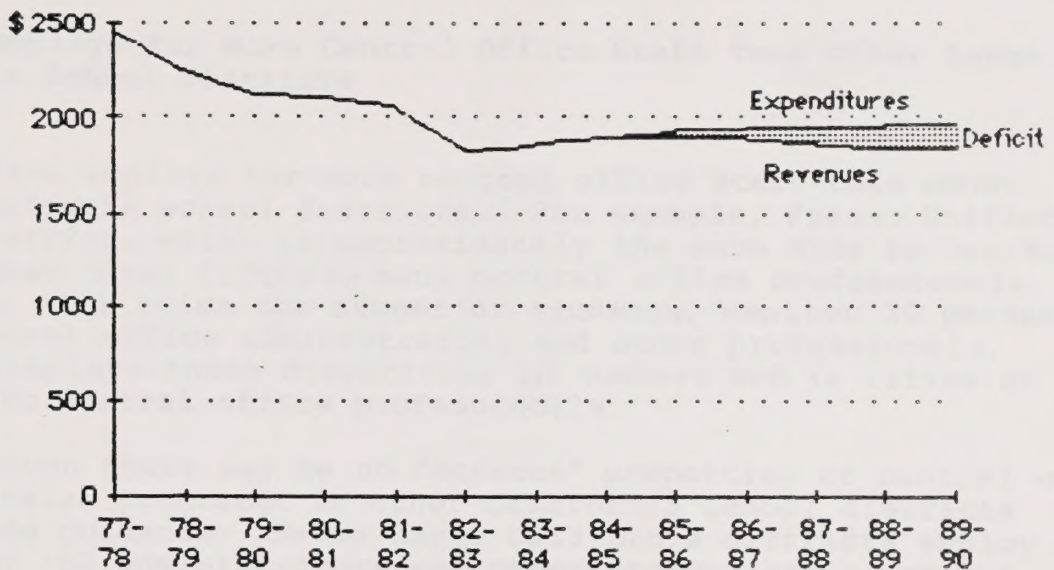


Figure 15

This graph displays actual Oakland revenue per student from 1977 to 1985, projected revenues through 1990, and projected expenditures through 1990. If current expenditure patterns persist, the district will face a 20 million dollar deficit by 1990.

VIII. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Education is a labor intensive activity. Thus, it is not surprising that 86 percent of the 1984-85 Oakland school budget is expended on salaries and benefits. Yet, Oakland's pattern of spending on its human resources differs from patterns in other large California school districts.

Oakland Employs Far More Central Office Staff Than Other Large California School Districts

Oakland employs far more central office staff than other large California school districts. For example, Fresno Unified School District, which is approximately the same size as Oakland, employs just three fifths as many central office professionals. San Diego, with twice the number of students, employs 30 percent fewer central office administrators and other professionals. Table 6 displays these disparities in numbers and in ratios of students to central office professionals.

Although there may be no "correct" proportion of central office professionals, practices in other California school districts may provide guidance. Seven large California districts employ an average of 102 administrators and other professionals, or one for every 516 students. Oakland, on the other hand, employs 177 central office administrators and other professionals, or one for every 284 students (Table 6 and Figure 16).

Similarly, the average U.S. school district with 25,000 or more students employs one central office professional for every 27.1 teachers. Oakland's ratio of teachers per central office professional is 12 to 1. By this measure, Oakland employs 133 percent more central office professionals than comparable school districts in the United States.

Some circumstances may warrant a higher number of central office staff. For example, Oakland and Fresno receive proportionally more revenue per student from state and federal categorical funds than other districts listed in Table 6. Oakland and Fresno also have more central office professionals than school districts of comparable size. Thus, a heavy reliance on categorical revenue may require more administrators. By itself, however, this is insufficient to explain Oakland's high number of central office staff.

Moreover, when Oakland and Fresno are excluded from the sample, a pattern of even smaller central offices appears. The remaining five school districts have an average of 86 central

TABLE 6

**Number and Ratio of Central Office
Administrators and Other Professionals,
Selected California School Districts**

<u>District</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Central Office Professionals</u>	<u>Ratio of Students to Professionals</u>
Oakland (1)	50,300	177 (2)	284:1
San Jose (3)	30,700	84	365:1
Mount Diablo	30,679	64	479:1
Fresno	54,305	109	498:1
Sacramento	41,151	78	527:1
Long Beach	61,919	80	733:1
San Diego	100,353	124	809:1

(1) Source: Oakland Unified School District, Employee Master File, April 1985.

(2) Oakland lists 230 personnel on its classified management salary schedule, but it also includes more categories of personnel than other school districts. To make accurate comparisons within this table, the 53 classified management positions included by Oakland but not included by other districts have been removed.

(3) Source for San Jose and other districts: Educational Research Service (ERS), Salaries and Wages in California Public Schools, 1984-85.

Central office administrators as reported to ERS include:

- 1) Pupil Personnel, Research, Food, Health, Transportation, Federal Programs, Plant Operations, Media Services.
- 2) All central office professional and administrative staff not otherwise specified.

RATIO OF ADMINISTRATORS TO STUDENTS*

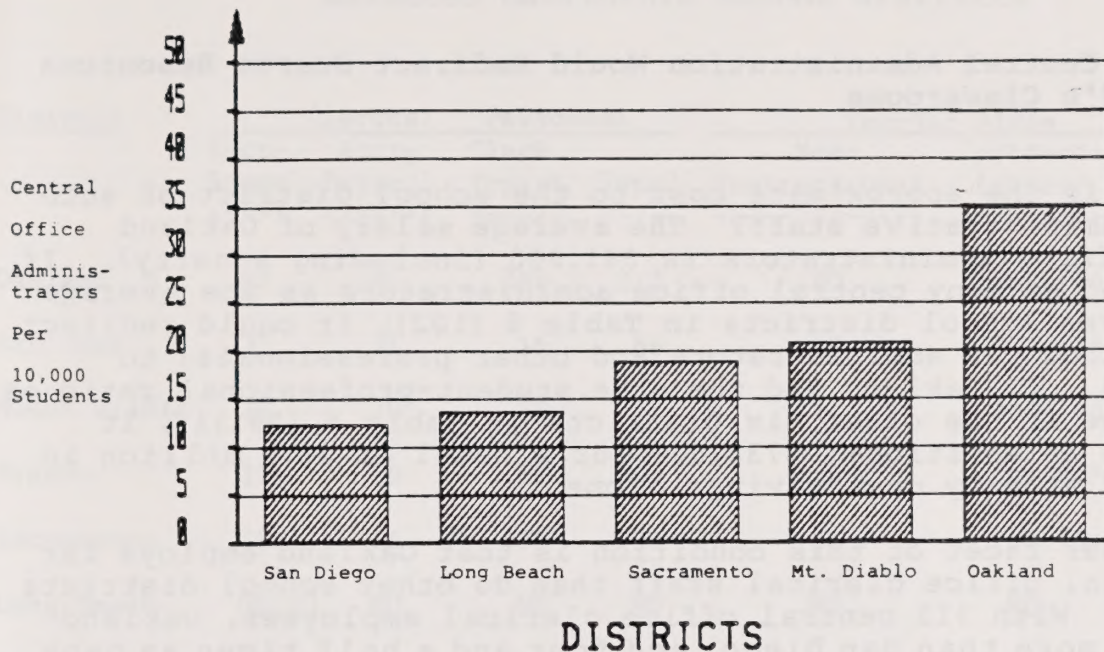


Figure 16

This figure compares the ratio of central office administrators* to students in five large California districts: San Diego, Long Beach, Sacramento, Mount Diablo, and Oakland. This figure is scaled as administrators per 10,000 students. For example, San Diego has 10 administrators per 10,000 students while Oakland has 35 administrators per 10,000.

*Includes central office administrators and other professionals.

office professionals or a student-professional ratio of 616 to 1. Meeting that standard in Oakland would mean reassigning 95 central office professionals with associated clerical personnel.

A Smaller Central Administration Would Redirect Scarce Resources to Oakland's Classrooms

What is the approximate cost to the school district of such a large administrative staff? The average salary of Oakland central office administrators is \$41,000 (including annuity). If Oakland had as many central office administrators as the average of the seven school districts in Table 6 (102), it could redirect \$3.08 million (75 administrators and other professionals) to classrooms. If Oakland had the same student-professional ratio as the average of the other six districts in Table 6 (592:1), it could save an additional \$738,000 for a total of \$3.8 million in salary and annuity cost savings alone.

Another facet of this condition is that Oakland employs far more central office clerical staff than do other school districts (Table 7). With 312 central office clerical employees, Oakland has seven more than San Diego, and four and a half times as many as San Jose. If Oakland employed only as many central office clerical staff as Fresno, a district with a similar population and, as we have seen, a large number of central office professionals, it could redirect approximately \$2.8 million to school sites (that is, 169 employees at 40 hours per week and \$8 per hour). The other school districts also have substantially fewer central office clerical staff.

If Oakland's pattern of spending on central office professionals and clerical support approximated the pattern in other large California school districts, it could redirect \$6.6 million annually to Oakland school sites, either in dollars or reassigned personnel.

Oakland Teacher Salaries Are Competitive If the Annuity Is Included

Oakland's certificated salary schedule compares favorably with those of local Bay Area school districts, if the 7.5 percent annuity is included (Table 8). Oakland's entry level salary-plus-annuity equals the area's average minimum salary, and its maximum salary-plus-annuity is \$196 less than the area average maximum salary. Oakland's salary-plus-annuity for the teacher who matches the national average of experience and level of education

TABLE 7

**Number of Central Office Clerical Personnel,
and Number and Ratio of Teacher Aides
Selected California School Districts**

<u>District</u>	<u>Clerical Personnel</u>				<u>Teacher Aides</u>	
	<u>Sect/ Steno</u>	<u>Acctg Payroll</u>	<u>Clerk Typist</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Non- Instructional</u>	<u>Instructional (ratio) (1)</u>
Oakland	45	61	206	312	80	682 (74:1)
San Jose	31	21	16	68	19	534 (58:1)
Mount Diablo	31	20	20	71	21	366 (85:1)
Fresno	37	28	78	143	0	1,099 (47:1)
Sacramento	46	14	30	90	44	767 (54:1)
Long Beach	ND(2)	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
San Diego	82	24	199	305	ND	1,675 (65:1)

(1) Ratio of students to instructional aides.

(2) No data.

Source: Educational Research Service, Salaries and Wages in California Public Schools, 1983-84

TABLE 8

Teacher Salary Comparisons
Bay Area School Districts
1984-85

	<u>Oakland(1)</u>		<u>Mean Selected Bay Area Districts(2)</u>	<u>Mean California 1984-85</u>	
	<u>With 7.5% Annuity</u>	<u>Without Annuity</u>		<u>All Districts</u>	<u>Districts >25,000 Students</u>
Low	17,663	16,431	17,668	17,639(3)	16,960(3)
High	32,280	29,981	32,476	32,133(3)	33,193(3)
12 years exp. plus M.A. or 60 units	27,721	25,787	29,240	26,403(4)	24,937(3)

-
- (1) Oakland Unified School District, Certificated Salary Schedule, 1984-85, K-12 and Adult Education Contract Teachers.
- (2) Telephone Survey May 15, 1985 and 1984-85 Salary Schedules for San Francisco, Hayward, Berkeley, Richmond, Piedmont, Newark, San Leandro Unified, San Lorenzo Unified, New Haven, Antioch, and Mount Diablo.
- (3) Educational Research Service, Salaries and Wages in California Public Schools, 1984-85.
- (4) National Education Association, Estimates of School Statistics, 1983-84, in John Augenblick, "Teacher Salaries and the States," October, 1984.

(12 years plus M.A.) is five percent less than the Bay Area mean for the average teacher.

Teachers who enter the Oakland system after 1984 will not fare as well, however. For new employees the annuity was traded away in the bargaining process. Without the annuity, Oakland's minimum salary is \$1,200 below the area average, its maximum salary is \$2,495 less than the average maximum salary, and its salary for the average teacher is \$3,453 less per year than in neighboring districts.

Resource Allocation Summary

- o Oakland employs far more central office administrators than other large California school districts.
- o A smaller central administration would redirect scarce resources to Oakland's classrooms.
- o Oakland teacher salaries are competitive if the annuity is included.

It is a very good idea to have a copy of this letter with you at all times.

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Page 1 of 1

Section 1: General Information	
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Phone: [Redacted]	
Email: [Redacted]	
Date of Birth: [Redacted]	
Date of Issue: [Redacted]	
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IX. POLICY DYNAMICS

In an enterprise as large as the Oakland public schools, school board policy should drive school changes. Educators and public officials in Oakland have taken extraordinary measures in recent years to develop policies intended to improve schools. Standards of achievement, uniform grading, and standardized curricula all are examples of Oakland's commitment to improving schools.

Yet the prevailing attitude of school employees and clients in Oakland is that few policies work, that little practically has changed, and that many district-wide policies are short-lived. What happens to create this perceived gap between policy and practice? Circumstances of policy development and a general lack of understanding regarding policy implementation have combined to undermine Oakland's school improvement efforts.

Past Administrative Practices and Political Conflicts Affect the Staff's Ability to Perform Effectively

Past administrative practices and political conflicts within the school district continue to affect the staff's present ability to work together effectively. For example, it is the widespread perception among district personnel that hiring for administrative positions has been, and to some extent still is, based more on loyalty toward school board members or those responsible for hiring and on personal characteristics, like race or sex, than on competence. As a result, principals and teachers express disrespect for many district administrators, including frequent assertions of incompetence and mistreatment. Central administration actions such as movement of principals and staff to the central office on "special assignment" when trouble erupts in their schools reinforce negative impressions that school site staff have of central office administrators and exacerbate dissension in the district.

In addition, pervasive conflicts between the school board and high levels of the district administration have created an intensely charged political atmosphere which further inhibits effective cooperation. Many administrators tend to view their own professional future as dependent upon pleasing the board, or certain board members, whether or not this supports the district administration. Hence, many conflicts among staff are rooted in conflicts with and between board members, as well as in hiring practices.

Because of the perceived need for board support, the administrative staff is plagued by conflict and insecurity.

Administrative attention, then, is trapped in weekly cycles of board and staff meetings which distort the balance between responding to immediate demands of the board and attending to long-range needs of school sites and the requirements of policy implementation.

A Short-Sighted Vision of Policy Leads to Confusion and Mistrust

The school district's highly politicized atmosphere creates a short-sighted vision of district policy. Responding to short-term political pressures, district administrators shift policy priorities frequently, develop policies too hurriedly, often change effective existing policies, and fail to follow through on requirements of past policies. Too often policies are dismantled or fall through organizational cracks without substantially changing district practice.

Frequent shifts in priorities inhibit sustained action on any reform front. Problems arise when policies are not effectively communicated to schools, implementation plans are not completed, or practices in schools do not change. Similarly, frequent changes in policy direction and inconsistencies among policies affect schools' abilities to respond.

Additionally, the number, variety, and scope of new policies that schools are expected to implement magnifies the difficulty in responding to any one policy. An analysis of school board policies over three years reveals a rational pattern and internal coherence that is not communicated to schools. Policies, then, seem to require a disjointed response. As schools confront policies without reference to a broader context, they experience constant upheaval. In fact, stronger principals view protecting their staff from district policy demands as among their primary responsibilities.

What commitment there is among principals to following district policies is often thwarted by the district's and board's tendency to overrule school-level decisions because a parent complains. This happens most often regarding issues such as pupil retention at a grade level because of poor performance, attendance, and classroom assignment. The chance that school decisions will be overturned if parents complain becomes part of the schools' deliberative processes, and a creeping sense of mistrust invades unaffected policy areas as well.

School Board Focuses Too Often on Policy Changes, Too Seldom on Oversight

A system cannot easily adjust to frequent changes in policy direction. Proposed policies must be carefully developed and their implementation carefully planned. The school board has not restricted itself to setting major policy direction and thereafter monitoring effects of policy. Presently, policies for Oakland schools come from both the board and central administration. This contributes to organizational confusion about who is in charge. Moreover, policy directions change frequently, suggesting that enacted policies were not appropriate in the first place.

The school board meets frequently on policy matters, and approximately twenty percent of the time of top level administrative staff is occupied preparing for and following up on board meetings. On the other hand, little board time is occupied in reviewing systematically collected information about the effects of policy and the performance of the overall system. The board is badly handicapped on this dimension by the absence of a comprehensive district test program and management information system.

Policy Implementation is Left to Schools with Only Minimal Direction and Support

Policy implementation is generally left to schools (not necessarily a problem in itself), but district administrators provide only minimal direction and support. In fact, at the district level, responsibility for implementation is often unclear. Once created, policies are handed to schools without a plan of action. As a result, policy implementation is vulnerable to weak site leadership, conflicting site priorities, and faculty or staff opposition.

Policies are not effectively communicated to those responsible for implementation, nor are those expected to implement policy involved in developing policy. In general, the district office communicates new policy and policy changes to schools through the mail or in principals' meetings. Principals, in turn, communicate these changes to teachers through faculty meetings or memos. Neither principals nor teachers express satisfaction with these procedures. As a result, teacher awareness of district policy is low, and those who are informed give policies mixed reviews.

Teachers report little or no follow up on required changes in classroom procedure or content. Since many policies require

teachers to change their behavior, failure to communicate goals, purposes, and substance of district policy to teachers sabotages change. Furthermore, teachers are seldom involved in policy decisions, other than through the limited avenue of collective bargaining.

Not surprisingly, teachers believe school improvement receives a low priority in Oakland. Sixty-four percent of Oakland teachers report that faculty meeting are primarily sessions in which the principal reads memos and makes announcements. Teachers would prefer to use faculty meetings for training and for solving school problems. Similarly, only 11 percent of Oakland teachers believe that innovation is regularly supported with time and money at their schools.

Twenty-six subject area specialists are available to assist schools, but there is no overall plan for specialists to support school staff in implementing complicated policies. Moreover, subject area specialists must meet service demands from both schools and the district office. Policy implementation resources that do exist are not targeted for schools needing them most. Rather they are given on a first-come, first-serve or grease-the-squeaky-wheel basis.

School Staff Have Few Incentives to Comply Faithfully with Policy Changes

As one might expect from the lack of clear direction for policy implementation, teachers report low levels of compliance with district policy. On the other hand, few of the central office administrators interviewed were able to discuss knowledgeably or articulately the different needs of specific schools. Principals confirmed this finding. They allege that district office administrators do not know individual schools in sufficient detail, too seldom come to their campuses, and do little to follow up on policy implementation.

Given the weak link between the district office and schools, principals have little incentive to respond to policy changes faithfully. Some principals immediately funnel district policy to teachers; others are selective in which policies they communicate and which they do not. Moreover, many principals have learned to postpone implementation efforts. They calculate a high likelihood that what is required of them one moment will change soon. They have learned that those who respond to the first notice find their compliance efforts wasted, and they gradually shift from complying early to waiting.

Frequent changes of policy, procedures, or expectations at the district level and lack of response by schools contributes to

suspicion and lack of respect between district administration and schools. A significant gap results between policy and practice in the Oakland public schools and, as a consequence, there is too little school improvement.

Policy Dynamics Summary

- o Ineffective past administrative practices and political conflicts impede the staff's present ability to perform effectively.
- o A short-sighted vision of policy leads to confusion and mistrust.
- o The school board is occupied too intensely with policy making and not sufficiently with systematic assessment of the system's performance.
- o The district is handicapped by the absence of a comprehensive testing program and management information system.
- o Schools are charged with policy implementation but are provided insufficient direction and support.
- o School staff have insufficient incentives to comply faithfully with policy changes.

X. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Oakland's schools face a number of challenging situations. Enrollments will grow, student achievement must be raised, a large number of new teachers must be hired, all staff need additional performance incentives and training, policy development and implementation mechanisms must be strengthened, students must be motivated, and public confidence restored. All of this must be accomplished within limited financial resources.

The task is large indeed. The Oakland Unified School District must carefully determine its priorities, focus resources on those goals, and reduce costs in all other areas.

Can it be done? Oakland already has several uncommonly effective schools. This demonstrates that students can learn and that Oakland teachers can teach them. It is possible to capture the elements of this success and spread them more widely throughout the school district.

In the critical area of policy development and implementation, reducing the gap between stated policies and practice in the schools seems extraordinarily difficult, at first glance. Mired in past and present conflicts, imbued with a basic sense of distrust, and cynical about the possibility of change, the district is lethargic and possesses insufficient sustained direction.

Yet, there are rays of hope. Many newly hired personnel within the district are perceived as positive additions to the staff. Conflict between school board and superintendent is waning, and despite past failings, many school site and district staff members express positive feelings about the district's future and the challenge of fulfilling its potential. Principals are in a pivotal position to affect change, and Oakland has many excellent principals. Also, many members of the business, religious, higher education, and health communities, and public officials are willing to assist.

While there is good reason for hope, there should be no illusion regarding the formidable nature of the reform task. Future actions must address each of the following:

- o Unacceptably low levels of student achievement
- o High drop-out rates
- o Too few secondary school academic course enrollments
- o Student delusions regarding quality of their schooling



- o Eroded public confidence
- o Increasing enrollments
- o Larger numbers of limited-English speaking students
- o Professional parent "flight"
- o Absence of an effective personnel evaluation system
- o Large classes
- o Low teacher morale
- o Shrinking dollar resources
- o Inadequate pupil performance measures
- o Ineffective management systems
- o Poor policy setting procedures
- o School Board-administration conflict
- o Misallocated fiscal resources
- o Inadequate systems for monitoring district performance.

Addressing the above problems effectively, planning for future changes, and capturing the elements of successful schools are goals for the second phase of this strategic planning effort. Reform recommendations to be included in the next report will concentrate on the substantial prospect of elevating all Oakland schools to a higher level of performance and student achievement than is presently the case.